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SUBJECT: BRAZIL: Ambassador's Lunch with General Jorge Armando Felix, Minister for Institutional Security

Classified by Ambassador John J. Danilovich for reasons 1.4 (B),(C) and(D).

1.(S) Ambassador hosted General Jorge Armando Felix, Minister for Institutional Security, for lunch at the residence on 4 May 2005. While General Felix has much less influence than his predecessor from the previous government, he is still the country's most senior intelligence official and the rough equivalent of national security advisor to the president. In addition to his own staff at the Ministry for Institutional Security (GSI), which contains representatives from the various Brazilian Government security and foreign relations agencies, General Felix is also responsible for overseeing the Brazilian National Intelligence Agency (ABIN).

2.(S) The Tri-Border Region: The Ambassador asked General Felix for an assessment of the transnational crime situation in the tri-border region of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. General Felix admitted that there were serious problems in the region and that the illegal movement of arms, money, drugs and the like through the region was of concern to the Brazilian Government. Felix said that both ABIN and the Brazilian Federal Police (DPF) were devoting additional personnel and resources to the problem and noted that ABIN even had some joint programs with RMAS that were focused on these issues.

3.(S) Counterterrorism: This led to a discussion on terrorism issues/operations in the tri-border region and throughout Brazil. General Felix said that ABIN worked closely with RMAS in jointly targeting individuals of interest, and the Ambassador expressed his appreciation for this assistance. General Felix said that in addition to the joint operations that we were working together, the Brazilian government was also appealing to moderate, second generation Arabs, many of whom were successful businessmen in Brazil, to keep a close eye on fellow Arabs who may be influenced by Arab extremists and/or terrorist groups. General Felix said that it was in the interest of these moderate, Arabs to keep potential firebrands in line and keep the microscope off of the Arab community in Brazil. General Felix said that the recently murdered former prime minister of Lebanon sent that same message to the Arab community in Brazil during a visit a few years back. General Felix said that it was important that counterterrorism operations were packaged properly so as not to negatively reflect on the proud and successful Arab community in Brazil.

4.(S) Venezuela: Following the CT discussion, the Ambassador raised Venezuela and its president Hugo Chavez and noted that Chavez was disrupting Brazil's efforts to play a leading role politically and economically in South America. General Felix nodded his head and appeared to be very carefully measuring his response. He then said that he had his own personal opinions about Chavez (which he did not share) that were different from the Brazilian Government's position. That being said, General Felix said that he preferred keeping in line with the official position (though he did not elaborate on it either). Felix noted that whether one was pro- or anti-Chavez, he had become very much a part of the "Latin American" reality.

5.(S) Additional Assistance: The Ambassador asked General Felix if there were any areas where the USG could better assist the GSI and/or ABIN. Felix said that he was very happy with the assistance currently being provided by the USG. One area where he claimed that the Brazilian Government was falling behind was in protecting its own classified and unclassified computer systems. Felix said that he would welcome any assistance (courses, visitors, etc.) in this area. Felix also said that he was trying to beef up the GSI and ABIN's SIGINT capabilities and could always use some assistance along those lines.

6.(S) Embassy Comment: General Felix is an amiable, low-key individual. He does not appear overly ambitious and admitted that he preferred traveling for the sake of pleasure as opposed to business. He is not someone who will make waves, and this likely contributed to his walking carefully through the Venezuela discussion. The above being said, General Felix has always been a straightforward interlocutor, and his term at GSI has been highlighted by very cooperative, joint CT operations between RMAS and

ABIN. All in all, his continued presence at GSI bodes well  
for U.S. interests.

DANILOVICH